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informed the Bassani that afterwards informed the Dutch school—the imitation of familiar objects without elevation and without selection; but the nature of Italy was as different from that of Holland as Bassano is different from Jan Steen. Like all the Venetians, the Bassani were good portrait painters. We have a fine portrait by Jacopo Bassano in our National Gallery, and at Hampton Court several very fine and characteristic pictures, which will give an excellent idea of his general manner. The best are Jacob's Journey and the Deluge. Mr. Rogers possesses the two best pictures of this artist now in England; they are small, but most beautiful, vivid as gems in point of color, with more dignity and feeling than is usual. The subjects are: the Good Samaritan, and Lazarus at the door of the Rich Man. Nothing could tempt Bassano from the little native town where he flourished, grew rich, and brought up a numerous family. He died in 1592.

All these men had original genius and that individuality of character which lends a vital interest to all productions of art, whether the style be elevated and ideal, or confined to the imitation of common nature; but to them succeeded a race of *mannerists* and imitators, so that about the close of the sixteenth century all originality seemed extinguished at Venice, as well as everywhere else. And here we close the history of the earlier painters of Italy.

THE END.

[From the Atlantic Monthly.]

CHESTER HARDING.

I wish to outline for American readers the history of an American artist who died last year, full of days and honors. It is a history which records how circumstances became as clay in the grasp of genius and resolution, and great results were developed from the most untoward beginnings.

Never, perhaps, were beginnings more untoward than the early years of Chester Harding. He was born in 1792, in Conway, a little town high up among the hills of Franklin County, Massachusetts. Identified during his boyhood with the fortunes of a family struggling hard for bare subsistence, with an unpractical and thriftless father, and a noble, but overworked and care-worn mother, as soon as he was able to be of use he set to work to earn his own living, as "hired boy," at six dollars a month, with a farmer of the neighborhood. This, however, was a taste of riches and independence compared with the life before and after. When Harding was fourteen, his father removed with all his family to Western New York. This was an undertaking of no small magnitude. Their new home was an unbroken wilderness—a week's toilsome journey from New England—where, after clearing the ground and building a rude log-cabin, Harding and his two elder brothers made flag-bottomed chairs for their neighbors, procuring by this means pork, flour, and potatoes, which were the dainties of the backwoods, while his father and the other children labored in the forest. The usual course of a settler's life was broken in upon by the war of 1812, and Harding shared fully in the excitement this occasioned. He entered the army as a drummer, and had a thorough experience of the pleasures and pains of military life. Sickness reduced him almost to the grave, and when, on recovering, he obtained his discharge from the ranks, he nearly perished with cold and hunger in attempting to reach his home. Here he remained for the next six months, employed in drum-making with his brother.

The energy which had not yet acquired a specific direction was beginning to manifest itself in restlessness under the routine of his daily life, and

readiness to embark in any enterprise that promised deliverance from it. A proposal to undertake the agency for a new spinning-head was eagerly accepted, and having "contrived to get a horse and wagon, with five or six dollars in money, besides a quantity of essences, such as peppermint, tansy, wintergreen, &c.," Harding set off for Connecticut, with golden dreams of fortune. If he did not realize these, he gained in his expedition some money and more experience, and thought it on the whole a profitable journey.

At this point love came in to complicate the situation. The account which Harding has left of his courtship is too graphic not to be given in his own words. "I happened," he says, "to meet with Caroline Woodruff, a lovely girl of twenty, with handsome, dark eyes, fine brunette complexion, and of an amiable disposition. I fell in love with her at first sight. I can remember the dress she wore at our first meeting as well as I do those beautiful eyes. It was a dark crimson-woollen dress, with a neat little frill about the neck. I saw but little of her; for the family soon moved to a distance of forty or fifty miles. Though she was absent, however, her image was implanted too deeply in my heart to be forgotten. It haunted me day and night. At length I took the resolution to go to see her; which was at once carried out. I set out on foot, found her, and proposed, and was bid to wait awhile for my answer. I went again, in the same way, and this time had the happiness to be accepted; and three weeks after she became my wife, and accompanied me to my home."

A little anecdote in regard to his marriage is characteristic. February 15, 1815, had been appointed for the wedding-day. On the afternoon previous the bride was making her last preparations; the guests were invited, the wedding-gloves and sash sent for, and the wedding-cake in the oven, when Harding drove up to the door and announced that he wanted to be married that day, as the snow was melting too fast for their journey home to be delayed twenty-four hours longer. So they were married the day beforehand. Mrs. Harding was accustomed to say, "It has been the day beforehand ever since."

Scarcely had the happy pair reached Caledonia, N. Y., where Harding was then living, when he was sued for debt. Much embarrassed in his business, which was then chair-making, he concluded to try tavern-keeping, but with no improvement in his fortunes. Matters at length became desperate. Imprisonment for debt seemed inevitable, and the thought of it was so horrible to him, that as a last resort he determined to leave his family, and look for employment in some safer locality. He quitted home in the night, traveled on foot to the Alleghany River, and as soon as practicable worked his way on a raft down to Pittsburg. There the prospect was not very encouraging, but Harding at length got a few jobs of house-painting, and with his small savings returned to Caledonia for his wife and child, with whom he again made the wearisome journey, but with better heart than before—perhaps with some presentiment of brighter days at hand.

Their home at Pittsburg was humble enough. "All our availables," Harding says, "consisted of one bed and a chest of clothing and some cooking utensils; so that we had little labor in getting settled down." For his household goods he had previously rented a "ten-footer" with two rooms in it. But now all his money was gone; he could get no more work as a house-painter. Had he brought his family so far only to starve, instead of feeding them? So deep was their poverty at this time, that a half-loaf of bread lent by a kind neighbor, and a piece of beef-steak obtained on credit, made them a luxurious meal, which was remembered with thankfulness in after years of plenty.

There was an opening for a sign-painter in Pittsburg, and Harding eagerly accepted this means of supplying his pressing wants. But he had no funds to procure the materials he needed, and was forced to resort for money to the kind

neighbor from whom he had borrowed bread. He was successful in this new business, and followed it a year. About this time a portrait-painter, "of the primitive sort," happened to show to Harding some specimens of his works, which opened to the struggling sign-painter a new world of thought and desire. Though he could ill afford the expense, he had his own and his wife's pictures painted, and was lost in admiration of the artist's skill. Day and night the thought of this wonderful art possessed him. An unconquerable longing to try his own powers in this new direction made him haunt the studio of the artist, who would give him no hint of his method, nor even allow Harding to see him work. At length, with a board, and such colors as he used in his trade, Harding began a portrait of his wife, and, to his own astonishment, "made a thing that looked like her." He was frantic with joy at the result. He painted several other portraits, and the occupation became so engrossing as to interfere seriously with his regular business. Nelson, the portrait-painter, whose pictures had given the first impulse to this newly-discovered faculty, was still disposed to be unfriendly. He ridiculed Harding's efforts, and told him it was sheer nonsense to attempt portrait-painting at his time of life. To the dejection which his criticisms occasioned was, however, opposed the admiration of others who probably had more sincerity, if less knowledge of art; and Harding's love of painting was now too strong to admit of his being easily discouraged. Hearing from his brother, who had removed to Paris, Kentucky, that an artist in Lexington was receiving fifty dollars a head for portraits, he resolved, with his accustomed suddenness, to establish himself in Paris, and arrived there with funds, as usual, low, but with a good stock of hope and courage, and a conviction that he had at last found his true vocation. In six months from that time, he had painted nearly a hundred portraits at twenty-five dollars apiece. "The first twenty-five I took," he writes, years afterward, "rather disturbed the equanimity of my conscience. It did not seem to me that the portrait was intrinsically worth that money; now I know it was not."

A two months' visit to Philadelphia produced wholesome criticism of his own attainments, and a still more eager ambition to excel. His own pictures lost something of their attraction for him, and he appreciated better the merits of those which he had previously undervalued. These two months of thoughtful study did more for him than years have done for many. The quick insight of genius penetrated at once the secrets which to mere talent unfold themselves but slowly. There was no longer any doubt about Harding's ultimate success, though he was yet far from reaching it. Other long and weary struggles with poverty had to be endured before he could work at leisure and without anxiety.

St. Louis offered a more favorable location for a rising artist than Kentucky, then embarrassed by financial troubles, and thither Harding went. There Fortune, at last, began to give him golden gifts, and with them came new aspirations. The artist-longing for Europe awakened in him, and he resolved to gratify it. But first he had a duty to perform. He went back to Caledonia, the scene of so many of his struggles and failures, paid all his debts, and visited his aged parents. Although proud of his success, his practical friends were far from satisfied with the profession he had chosen. His grandfather said to him one day, very seriously, "Chester, I want to speak to you about your present mode of life. I think it is very little better than swindling, to charge forty dollars for one of those effigies. Now I want you to give up this course of living, and settle down on a farm, and become a respectable man."

Harding, however, held firmly to his project of studying in Europe. He had taken passage in the ill-fated *Albion*; his trunk was packed, and he was about to set out, when his mother made a last effort to detain him. She represented to him the helpless condition of his wife and children in case he should never return, and urged

him to put off his journey till he had made a home for them; and could leave them comfortably provided for in the event of his death. Her reasoning prevailed. The very next day Harding purchased a farm of one hundred and fifty acres, and having made a contract for a house to be built upon it, he started for Washington, leaving his family for the winter with his father and mother. The season at Washington was a successful one for him. It was his first introduction into what is called good society. The plain man was modest almost to bashfulness in the circle to which his genius had introduced him; but his good sense, simplicity, and kindness made him everywhere a welcome guest, and attracted to him friendship, as his pictures brought him fame. While spending a part of the next summer at Northampton, Mass., Harding was warmly urged to establish himself in Boston. He did so, early in 1823, and succeeded beyond his highest expectations. Sitters flocked to his studio, in such numbers that he had to keep a book for them to register their names. Probably no other American artist ever enjoyed so great popularity. Gilbert Stuart, in Harding's own estimation, the greatest portrait-painter this country ever produced, then in his prime, was idle half that winter. He used to ask his friends, "How rages the Harding fever?"

But popularity did not intoxicate the artist. He viewed it chiefly as a means of hastening the accomplishment of his long-cherished purpose, and though after having painted eighty portraits, he had still a greater number of applicants awaiting their turn, he decided to go to Europe at once. He reached London in the autumn of 1823, and directly began his studies. Leslie met him cordially. He received encouragement and commendation from Sir Thomas Lawrence, and through the influence of his fellow-countryman, Mr. Hunter, obtained a commission to paint the portrait of his Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex, which was, of course, the best introduction to general favor. Among the other celebrities who sat to him, either during this visit to England or a subsequent one, were the Duke of Hamilton, the Duke of Norfolk, Alison the historian, and Samuel Rogers. Harding remained abroad three years.

The latter part of Chester Harding's life is but a repetition of successes in his profession. His portraits of Daniel Webster are acknowledged to be among the best ever painted. The one in the Boston Athenæum is perhaps a fair example of his style. A characteristic of his portraits was a suggestiveness. They seem to give us, not only the prominent expression of the countenance at the moment, but the possibilities of its expression in other moods. Hints of temperament and character lurk in the fine lines which Nature draws upon the living face; the more observable features really have but little part in the changing play of the countenance. And in Harding's portraits the chief excellence is their thorough comprehension of the subject, their representation of the man, and not simply of the conformation of his features at a particular period.

In his private life, Harding was, to the last, simple-hearted, unostentatious, and genial. His friendships were as tender as a woman's, and as enduring as his life. With Webster he enjoyed an intimacy of many years, and some of his happiest hours were spent in the unrestrained intercourse of Webster's family circle.

He was fond of relating the following anecdote, "I had a few bottles of old Scotch whiskey, such as Wilson and Scott have immortalized under the name of 'mountain dew.' This beverage is always used with hot water and sugar. I put a bottle of this whiskey into my overcoat-pocket, one day when I was going to dine with Mr. Webster; but I thought, before presenting it to him I would see who was in the drawing-room. I put the bottle on the entry table, walked into the drawing-room, and seeing none but the familiar party, said, 'I have taken the liberty to bring a Scotch gentleman to partake of your hospitality to-day.' 'I am most happy, sir,' was the reply. I walked back to the entry, and pointed to the

bottle. 'Oh,' said he, 'that is the gentleman that bathes in hot water.'

As the years went on, and Harding's children, one by one, settled in homes of their own—his faithful and dearly beloved wife, the sharer of his varied fortunes, having died in 1845—he divided his time between attention to his profession, visits to these new homes, where he was always welcomed most gladly, and his favorite recreation of fishing. The last winter of his life was spent in St. Louis, and there he painted his last picture, the portrait of General Sherman. His hand had not lost its cunning. The portrait is one of his best. March 27, 1866, he started for Cape Cod, his favorite resort for fishing at that season. Stopping for a few days, on his way, at Boston, he complained of slight illness, and almost before his danger was realized by those around him, he sank away to death. This was on April 1. Harding had loved Boston better than any other spot where he had rested in his wanderings. "I feel," he says, "that I owe more to it than to any other place; more of my professional life has been spent in that city than anywhere else; and it is around it that my most grateful recollections cluster."

His tall, patriarchal form was familiar to Bostonians. During the later years of his life he wore a full beard, which, with his hair, was silvery white, and a short time before his death he sat to an artist for a head of St. Peter. The artists of Boston publicly acknowledged their loss of "a genial companion, and a noble, and generous rival." A later age may estimate more truly the value of his works; but the lesson of his life is for this country and for to-day.

ART MATTERS.

The Brooklyn Art Association gave a reception at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on Tuesday evening of this week. It is of course needless to say that beautiful women and sheepish looking Brooklyn cavaliers were there in large numbers.

There are two distinctive peculiarities in the population of the "City of Churches"—the surpassing beauty of the female portion thereof, and the curious lack of expression noticeable in the faces of the young men. Why this should be I know not, but the fact is undoubted, and strikes the more enlightened New Yorker with great force whenever he may venture across the water in search of Art, Music, or the Drama, in all of which Brooklyn is greatly favored.

The Brooklyn Art Association has now become an established thing; good management and efficient officers have brought it to a rare state of excellence, and it can now hold its own among the largest associations of like character in the country. In view of this, it would appear to indicate bad judgment to attempt the establishment of a similar institution, and the gentlemen who have founded the Brooklyn Academy of Design certainly deserve greater credit as artists than as men of business.

Even in New York it is found impossible to maintain more than one art institution, the National Academy, and it is not to be expected that Brooklyn, a much smaller city, can surpass its more powerful rival.

The Brooklyn Art Association covers exactly the same ground as is proposed by the new Academy; it has its schools, its annual exhibitions, and has lately purchased a plot of ground on which to erect a suitable building. In short, it is the first in the field, and by the untiring efforts of its officers has won a place in the esteem of the Brooklynites which no rival establishment

can hope to gain. Let the new Academy join forces with the Art Association and together they will form a powerful and influential body.

The exhibition of Tuesday evening was a great success, not only in the number and beauty of the ladies present, but in the number and beauty of the pictures exhibited, many of which were there seen for the first time.

Going through the collection in the order of the catalogue, the first picture which demands attention is "The Botanist," by T. C. Farrar. If any man be a disciple of the ultra preraaphaelite school, here is a picture which must teach him the error of his ways. It is a painted sermon against that paintless of all theories.

A young girl, or rather what is supposed to be a young girl, is sitting in a field studying the bunch of flowers which she holds in her hand. After careful study I have arrived at the conclusion that no human being could possibly sit in the position this young girl is sitting. After careful study I have also arrived at the conclusion that no human being could be proportioned as this young girl is proportioned. Mr. Farrar has evidently had the same feeling and kindness to suffering humanity, and made his young girl of a texture very much resembling cast iron. The landscape has shared the same fate. Not to be ironical, pardon the badness of the pun, Mr. Farrar's "Botanist" as a specimen of iron-work is undoubtedly clever, but as a specimen of painting is just as undoubtedly bad.

"A Fog, Adirondacks," by J. A. Parker, Jr., is worthy of but little remark save for the curious natural phenomenon introduced therein, to wit: a *circular rainbow*! Circular rainbows may be peculiarities of the Adirondacks, but I am forced to say I never saw one there.

"Coast Scene," by Wm. Hart, is a brilliant sunset effect, rich and luminous in color, and painted with great purity of feeling and sentiment.

Gignoux's "Spring" is a perfectly delicious picture; fresh, sparkling, full of delicate color, and in every way a perfect gem.

Bellows' "A Day in the Woods," which has already been noticed in these columns, is another charming work of art; fully realizing in its finished condition all the promise of excellence it gave when on the artist's easel.

"Playing Two Games at the same time," by L. E. Wilmarth, is far in advance of the picture exhibited by the gentleman at the last Academy Exhibition; it represents a young and gallant cavalier, who, while playing at chess with a venerable old gentleman, is making love across the table to a fair young girl who is standing behind her father's chair. The expression of the faces is full of character, while the painting of the drapery and accessories is really excellent, displaying great elaboration of detail and richness of color.

"The Initials," by Homer, is one of those clever little *genre* pictures in which Mr. Homer is successful. A very pretty young lady is carving her name upon a tree, and when the visitor looks at this and then compares it with "The Botanist," a picture very similar in character, he must confess that preraaphaelitism must hide its diminished head.